

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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AMEMBASSY SEOUL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 10414

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, JA, US
SUBJECT: CONCEPTUAL BREAKTHROUGH ON DEFENSE COST SHARING

SUMMARY: IN COURSE OF RESPONSE TO DIET INTERPELLATIONS
JUNE 6, GOJ OFFICIALS REDEFINED 1973 OHIRA VIEW SO AS
TO PERMIT GOJ TO PROVIDE NEW FACILITIES FOR US UNDER
COST SHARING PROGRAM AND INDICATED GENERAL INTENTION TO
PROVIDE FUNDS IN JFY 79 BUDGET. DOOR WAS ALSO LEFT
OPEN FOR POTENTIAL COST SHARING IN LABOR FIELD. END
SUMMARY.

1. AT JUNE 6 MEETING OF LOWER HOUSE CABINET COMMITTEE,
GOJ, IN EFFECT, REVISED 1973 OHIRA VIEW WHICH HAS HERETO-
FORE LIMITED GOJ TO PROVIDING NEW FACILITIES TO US FORCES
ONLY ON EXPLICIT QUO-PRO-QUO BASIS. JDA DIRGEN KANEMARU
ESTABLISHED POLICY CONTEXT BY CITING IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN-
US SECURITY RELATIONSHIP AND EXTENT TO WHICH US FORCES
HAVE SUFFERED DUE TO EXCHANGE-RATE FLUCTUATIONS. DFAA
DIRGEN WATARI THEN SAID THAT GOJ SHOULD DO WHAT IT COULD
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IN CONTEXT OF MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY, SOFA AND OHIRA
VIEW TO ASSIST US FORCES. SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO
OHIRA VIEW, HE STATED THAT IT PERTAINED ONLY TO RELOCA-
TION OR SUBSTITUTE CONSTRUCTION OF EXISTING US FACILITIES
AND DID NOT PRECLUDE OFFERS OF NEW FACILITIES AT GOJ
INITIATIVE. HE ADDED THAT, ASSUMING INTER-AGENCY AGREE-
MENT COULD BE OBTAINED, SUCH FUNDS WOULD BE INCORPORATED

IN JFY 79 BUDGET. MOFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRGEN NAKAJIMA PROVIDED OFFICIAL SOFA INTERPRETATION THAT OHIRA VIEW WAS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF PROVISIONS OF PARA 2, ARTICLE 24, BUT RATHER APPLIED TO ONLY ABOVE TWO SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF FACILITY PROVISION.

2. ALL VERNACULAR PAPERS GAVE WIDE COVERAGE TO THESE NEW GOJ VIEWS NOTING THAT THEY REPRESENTED MODIFICATION OF OHIRA VIEW WHICH WOULD PERMIT GOJ INTER ALIA TO OFFER NEW CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTIAL HOUSING FOR US FORCES. NIHON KEIZAI REPORTED THAT KANEMARU AND OTHER JDA LEADERS ORIGINALLY HAD INSISTED ON EXPLICITLY SCRAPPING OHIRA VIEW BUT THAT MOFA, CABINET LEGISLATIVE BUREAU AND OTHERS HAD OPPOSED THIS LINE AND PREVAILED. (JDA AND MOFA SOURCES HAVE INFORMED US GOVERNMENT RESPONSES WERE CAREFULLY PREPARED AFTER LONG DELIBERATION.)

3. ALTHOUGH NOT COVERED BY PRESS, LABOR-COST SHARING WAS ALSO RAISED AT SAME SESSION. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY JCP REPRESENTATIVE AS TO WHETHER SOFA PERMITTED GOJ TO PAY FOR SUCH EXPENSES AS RETIREMENT, LANGUAGE ALLOWANCES AND DIFFERENTIALS, WATARI REPLIED THAT, IF IT BECAME NECESSARY, GOJ WOULD STUDY THAT QUESTION BUT THAT UP TO NOW THERE HAD BEEN NO REASON TO DO SO. BY THUS EVADING DIRECT REPLY, GOJ HAS LEFT DOOR OPEN FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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POSSIBLE PROGRESS IN THIS FIELD.

4. COMMENT: GOJ HAS MELDED ENTHUSIASM OF KANEMARU WITH IMAGINATIVE IF SOMEWHAT TIME CONSUMING EFFORTS BY MOFA AND JDA STAFFERS TO PRODUCE VIABLE WAY AROUND OHIRA VIEW. SIMILAR INTERPRETATION CONCEIVABLY COULD BE EXTENDED TO OHIRA-JOHNSON AGREEMENT, AND MOFA/JDA MAY ALREADY TACITLY HAVE DONE SO BY RAISING NO OBJECTIONS TO INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OF NAVY HOUSING REQUIREMENTS IN KANTO PLAIN. IN SUM, WE BELIEVE GOJ HAS MADE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN PAVING WAY FOR POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL USFJ BUDGET RELIEF. MANSFIELD

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